

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Deer Flat

National Wildlife Refuge

Birds



The Lake Lowell and Snake River Islands Units of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge provide a watery oasis for resident and migratory wildlife.

The Refuge

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge has two units. The Lake Lowell Unit has over 10,000 acres, including the almost 9,000-acre Lake Lowell and surrounding lands. The Snake River Islands Unit contains about 1,200 acres on over 100 islands. The Refuge has been designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society.

Over one hundred species are known to nest at the Refuge, so spring and early summer are good times to observe nesting activities and young birds. As summer progresses and the lake is slowly drawn down for irrigation, large numbers of shorebirds come to feed on the exposed mudflats.

As fall approaches, the number of birds using the refuge increases. Resident flocks of ducks and Canada geese are usually on Lake Lowell by the second week of October. As colder weather drives migrating ducks and geese south, migratory birds join the resident birds at the lake. Some birds pass through while others spend the winter. By mid-November, the goose population peaks at up to 15,000 birds.

Duck populations peak in mid-December, with up to 150,000 on Lake Lowell. Geese and ducks roost on the lake at night, their activity usually keeping patches of water open all winter. Bald eagles, which move into the area to feed on weak and injured birds, can often be seen around the lake. The Snake River also provides a winter home for a variety of waterfowl, including goldeneyes, scaup, mergansers, buffleheads, wood ducks, green-winged teals and a large number of mallards.

Getting the Most from Your Visit

The Refuge is open to the public all year from sunrise to sunset. Please help protect wildlife and their habitats by obeying all regulations. Some areas are closed to public use, so please observe signs.

The Lake Lowell Unit is easily accessible by road from Nampa and Caldwell, Idaho. The Snake River Islands Unit is accessible only by boat, although some sections can be viewed from roads along the river.

The Refuge Visitor Center is located about 5 miles southeast of Nampa and is open 8:00 am to 4:00 pm weekdays and 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Saturdays. It provides an observation room overlooking Lake Lowell, interpretive panels about the wildlife and history of the Refuge, and a Kids' Activity Area. Nearby are several trails, as well as a viewing blind and viewing platforms. Ask for Refuge brochures and information on areas open for your enjoyment.

You will see more birds if you time your visit for early morning or evening hours, sit quietly, and wait for the birds to come to you. If walking, move slowly and quietly to avoid scaring wildlife. Be sure to listen for calls and songs. A good field guide and binoculars or a spotting scope will help you identify what you see.

If driving, your car is an excellent blind; for better viewing opportunities, stay in your car. Lake Lowell and Snake River Islands driving tours are available.

Whether you are a seasoned "birder" or are just beginning, we wish you rewarding and memorable experiences from this visit to the refuge. Come back again soon!

Checklist Notes

This list includes 249 species that have been observed on the Refuge since 1950. Habitat, seasonal occurrence, and abundance are coded as follows.

Habitats

- W - On or near water
- G - Grassland and dry uplands
- D - Deciduous woodlands and riparian areas
- A - Agriculture
- S - Species more likely to be seen on the Snake River Islands Unit

Seasons

- Sp - Spring = March-May
- S - Summer = June-August
- F - Fall = September-November
- W - Winter = December-February

Abundance

- a - abundant = a common species that is very numerous
- c - common = certain to be seen in suitable habitat
- u - uncommon = might be seen in suitable habitat
- o - occasional = seen only a few times during a season
- r - rare = seen at intervals of 2-5 years
- v - vagrant = highly unusual
- * - species that nest on the refuge

Refuge personnel, visiting professionals, and amateur ornithologists have contributed observations for this list. This list is undoubtedly incomplete; other species probably use the Refuge. To improve future editions of this list, please provide confirmed sightings of species listed as rare or vagrant, as well as of species not on this list.

Birds of Deer Flat NWR

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Geese, Swans, and Ducks					
Greater White-fronted Goose	W,A	o		u	o
Snow Goose	W,A	u	r	u	o
Ross's Goose	W,A	r		o	o
*Canada Goose	W,A	c	c	a	a
Trumpeter Swan	W	o		o	
Tundra Swan	W	u	r	u	o
*Wood Duck	W,D	c	c	c	o
*Gadwall	W	u	u	o	
Eurasian Wigeon	W	r		r	r
*American Wigeon	W	c	u	a	c
*Mallard	W,A	a	c	a	a
*Blue-winged Teal	W	o	u	u	
*Cinnamon Teal	W	c	c	u	
*Northern Shoveler	W	o	u	c	o
*Northern Pintail	W	c	c	a	c
*Green-winged Teal	W	c	c	a	a
Canvasback	W	o		o	
*Redhead	W	u	u	u	r
Ring-necked Duck	W	o		u	o
Greater Scaup	W	o		o	o
Lesser Scaup	W	u	r	c	u
Harlequin Duck	S,W				v
White-winged Scoter	S,W				r
Long-tailed Duck	W			r	r
Bufflehead	S,W	o		u	o
Common Goldeneye	W	c		a	a
Barrow's Goldeneye	S,W	r		r	u
Hooded Merganser	W	u	o	u	o
*Common Merganser	W	u	u	c	c
Red-breasted Merganser	W	o		u	u
*Ruddy Duck	W	u	o	u	
Gallinaceous Birds					
*California Quail	G,D,A	a	a	a	a
Northern Bobwhite	G,A	r	r	r	r
*Chukar	S,G,A	r	r	o	o
*Gray Partridge	G,A	o	o	o	o
*Ring-necked Pheasant	G,A	c	c	c	c
Wild Turkey	S,D	o	o	o	o

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Loons					
Pacific Loon	W			r	
Common Loon	W	o	o	o	o
Grebes					
*Pied-billed Grebe	W	u	u	u	u
Horned Grebe	W	r	o	o	
*Eared Grebe	W	o	r	u	u
*Western Grebe	W	c	a	c	r
*Clark's Grebe	W	c	a	c	r
Pelicans and Cormorants					
American White Pelican	W	c	c	o	
*Double-crested Cormorant	W	c	c	c	u
Bitterns, Herons and Egrets					
*American Bittern	W	o	o	r	
Least Bittern	W	v			
*Great Blue Heron	W,D	c	a	c	u
*Great Egret	W,D	c	c		
*Snowy Egret	W,D	c	r		
Cattle Egret	W,A	r	r		
Green Heron	W		r	r	
*Black-crowned Night-Heron	S,W,D	c	c	c	o
Ibis and Spoonbills					
White-faced Ibis	W	o	u	r	



Right: Great blue herons in a rookery.

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Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
New World Vultures					
Turkey Vulture	S,G,A	u	u	u	u
Osprey, Kites, Hawks and Eagles					
*Osprey	W,D	c	c	c	
*Bald Eagle	W,D	c	c	c	c
*Northern Harrier	W,G,A	c	c	c	c
Sharp-shinned Hawk	G,D	u	c	c	u
*Cooper's Hawk	G,D	o	o	o	u
Northern Goshawk	D	o	r	o	o
*Swainson's Hawk	G,A	c	c	o	
*Red-tailed Hawk	G,D,A	c	c	c	c
Ferruginous Hawk	G,A	r	r	r	
Rough-legged Hawk	G,A	o		u	u
Golden Eagle	S,G	o	o	u	u
Falcons					
*American Kestrel	G,D,A	c	c	c	c
Merlin	G,D	o	r	o	u
Gyr Falcon	G, A				v
Peregrine Falcon	W,G,A	r	o	o	r
Prairie Falcon	S,G,A	o	u	u	o
Rails					
*Virginia Rail	W	u	c	u	
*Sora	W	u	c	u	
*American Coot	W	a	a	a	u
Cranes					
Sandhill Crane	W,G	r	r		
Plovers					
Black-bellied Plover	W		o	o	
American Golden-Plover	W			r	
Snowy Plover	W		v		
Semipalmated Plover	W		u	u	
*Killdeer	W,G	a	a	c	o
Stilts and Avocets					
*Black-necked Stilt	S,W	o	u		
*American Avocet	S,W	u	c	u	

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Sandpipers					
*Spotted Sandpiper	S,W	u	u	u	
Solitary Sandpiper	W	o	o	o	
Greater Yellowlegs	W	u	u	u	
Willet	W	o	o	o	
Lesser Yellowlegs	W	u	u	u	
Long-billed Curlew	W,G	o	o		
Marbled Godwit	W	o	o	o	
Red Knot	W		v	v	
Sanderling	W			r	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	W			u	
Western Sandpiper	W	u	c	c	
Least Sandpiper	W	o	o	u	
Baird's Sandpiper	W		o	u	
Pectoral Sandpiper	W		o	o	
Dunlin	W	r		o	
Stilt Sandpiper	W		r	o	
Short-billed Dowitcher	W		r	r	
Long-billed Dowitcher	W	o	u	u	
Snipe					
*Wilson's Snipe	W	c	u	u	o
Phalaropes					
Wilson's Phalarope	W	u	u	u	
Red-necked Phalarope	W	o	r	o	
Gulls and Terns					
Sabine's Gull	W		v	v	
Bonaparte's Gull	W	r	r	o	
Franklin's Gull	W	o	u	o	
*Ring-billed Gull	W,A	a	a	a	a
*California Gull	W,A	a	a	a	c
Herring Gull	W			o	o
Thayer's Gull	W				r
Lesser Black-backed Gull	W				r
Glaucous-winged Gull	W				r
*Caspian Tern	W	c	c	u	
*Black Tern	W	o	u	o	
Common Tern	W	r	u	o	
Forster's Tern	W		o	o	

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Doves					
*Rock Pigeon	D,A	a	a	a	a
*Eurasian Collared-Dove	G,D,A	a	a	a	a
*Mourning Dove	G,D,A	a	a	a	a
Cuckoos					
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	D		v		
Owls					
*Barn Owl	G,D,A	u	u	u	u
Flammulated Owl	D			r	
*Western Screech-Owl	D	c	c	c	c
*Great Horned Owl	G,D,A	c	c	c	c
Snowy Owl	G				v
Northern Pygmy-Owl	G	r		r	r
Burrowing Owl	G,A	r	r	r	r
Barred Owl	D				r
*Long-eared Owl	D	o	o	o	u
Short-eared Owl	W,A	r	r	r	r
Northern Saw-whet Owl	D	o		o	o
Nightjars					
*Common Nighthawk	G,D	u	c	u	
Common Poorwill	G		v		



Western screech-owl. ©Dick McKee

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Swifts					
Vaux's Swift	S,W	r	r		
White-throated Swift	S,W,G	o	o		
Hummingbirds					
*Black-chinned Hummingbird	D	u	c	c	
Calliope Hummingbird	D		u	u	
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	D			r	
Rufous Hummingbird		r	o	o	
Kingfishers					
*Belted Kingfisher	W,D	u	u	c	c
Woodpeckers					
Lewis's Woodpecker	D	o	o	o	
*Downy Woodpecker	D	c	c	c	c
Hairy Woodpecker	D	o	o	o	o
*Northern Flicker	D	c	c	c	c
Flycatchers					
Olive-sided Flycatcher	D	o	o	o	
*Western Wood-Pewee	D	u	u	o	
Willow Flycatcher	D	o	o		
Gray Flycatcher	G,A	r			
Cordilleran Flycatcher	D		r		
*Say's Phoebe	G,D	u	u	r	
Ash-throated Flycatcher	D		r	r	
*Western Kingbird	D,A	c	c	u	
*Eastern Kingbird	G,D	u	u	o	
Shrikes					
*Loggerhead Shrike	S,G,A	u	u	o	o
Northern Shrike	G,A			u	u
Vireos					
Plumbeous Vireo	D	o		o	
Cassin's Vireo	D	o		o	
*Warbling Vireo	D	u	u	u	
Red-eyed Vireo	D	o		o	

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Jays, Magpies, and Crows					
Steller's Jay	D				r
Blue Jay	D			v	v
*Black-billed Magpie	G,D,A	a	a	a	a
*American Crow	D,A	c	c	a	a
*Common Raven	S,G,D	c	c	c	c
Larks					
*Horned Lark	G	o	o	o	o
Swallows					
*Tree Swallow	S,W,D	o	o	o	
*Violet-green Swallow	S,W,D	c	u	u	
*Northern Rough-winged	S,W	c	c	c	
*Bank Swallow	S,W,A	c	c	u	
*Cliff Swallow	S,W,G	a	a	a	
*Barn Swallow	W,A	a	a	c	
Titmice and Chickadees					
*Black-capped Chickadee	D	c	c	c	c
Mountain Chickadee	D			u	u
Bushtits					
Bushtit	D,S	u	u		
Nuthatches					
Red-breasted Nuthatch	D		o	o	u
White-breasted Nuthatch	D	o		r	o
Creepers					
Brown Creeper	D			u	u
Wrens					
*Rock Wren	S,G	o	o	o	o
*Canyon Wren	S,G	o	o	o	o
*House Wren	D	c	u	o	
Pacific Wren	D			o	r
*Marsh Wren	W	c	c	c	o

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Kinglets, Bluebirds, and Thrushes					
Golden-crowned Kinglet	D	o		o	u
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	D	c	u	u	c
Western Bluebird	G,D	r		r	
Mountain Bluebird	G,D	r		r	r
Townsend's Solitaire	D	o		o	o
Swainson's Thrush	D	r		r	
Hermit Thrush	D	u	o	o	r
*American Robin	G,D	a	a	c	c
Varied Thrush	D			r	r
Mockingbirds and Thrashers					
Gray Catbird	D	v		v	
Northern Mockingbird	G,D,A	r		r	r
*Sage Thrasher	S,G	o	u	o	
Starlings					
*European Starling	G,D,A	a	a	a	a
Pipits					
American Pipit	W,G	o	o	u	u
Waxwings					
Bohemian Waxwing	D	r			o
*Cedar Waxwing	D	u	o	c	c
Warblers					
Orange-crowned Warbler	D	o	o	o	o
Nashville Warbler	D	o		o	
*Yellow Warbler	D	u	c	c	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	D	v	v		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	D	u	o	c	u
Townsend's Warbler	D	o		o	
MacGillivray's Warbler	D	o	r		
*Common Yellowthroat	D	c	c	r	
Wilson's Warbler	D	u	o	u	
*Yellow-breasted Chat	S,D	c	c		

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Towhees and Sparrows					
Green-tailed Towhee	S,D	r			
Spotted Towhee	D	u	u	u	u
American Tree Sparrow	G,D			r	o
Chipping Sparrow	G,D		o	o	r
Brewer's Sparrow	G	u	u	u	
*Vesper Sparrow	G	o	o	o	
*Lark Sparrow	S,G	o	u	u	
Black-throated Sparrow	G		v		
Sage Sparrow	G		v		
*Savannah Sparrow	G	u	u	u	r
Grasshopper Sparrow	G		v		
Fox Sparrow	D	r			r
*Song Sparrow	W,D	c	c	c	c
Lincoln's Sparrow	D	o		u	u
White-throated Sparrow	D				v
Harris's Sparrow	G,D				r
White-crowned Sparrow	G,D,A	c	o	a	c
Dark-eyed Junco	D	u		c	a
Lapland Longspur	G				r
Snow Bunting	G				r
Grosbeaks and Allies					
Western Tanager	D	u	o	c	
*Black-headed Grosbeak	D	c	c	u	
*Lazuli Bunting	S,D	u	c	r	
Indigo Bunting	D,A		v		
Blackbirds and Orioles					
*Red-winged Blackbird	W,A	a	a	a	u
*Western Meadowlark	G,A	c	c	a	u
*Yellow-headed Blackbird	W,A	c	c	o	o
*Brewer's Blackbird	G,A	a	a	a	c
Common Grackle	G,A			v	v
Great-tailed Grackle	G,A	r	r	r	r
*Brown-headed Cowbird	G,A	c	c	u	
*Bullock's Oriole	W,D	c	c	u	

Common Name	Habitat	Sp	S	F	W
Finches					
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	S,G				o
Black Rosy-Finch	S,G				o
Cassin's Finch	D	r	r	r	o
*House Finch	D	a	a	a	c
Common Redpoll	D				v
Pine Siskin	D			o	c
*American Goldfinch	G,D	c	c	c	c
Evening Grosbeak	D	o	r	o	u
Weaver Finches					
*House Sparrow	D	a	a	a	a

Field Notes

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<http://www.fws.gov/deerflat>

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Refuge Information
1 800/344 WILD



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Western Grebe.
USFWS/Addison Mohler

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